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Friday, August 8, 2008

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Friday, August 8, 2008

Murderer is told: 'You are pure evil, a coward'

Life sentence in 1986 killing of 13-year-old Cindy Zarzycki

Christina Stolarz and Candace Begody / The Detroit News

MOUNT CLEMENS -- Convicted kidnapper and killer Arthur Ream told a packed courtroom Thursday that he didn't rape Cindy Zarzycki, but he didn't deny killing her more than two decades ago.

"Not everything is the way it seems," said Ream, 59, who was sentenced to life in prison without parole. "I did not touch her in any sexual way. I know they (Cindy's family) have no reason to believe me."

Ream said he would take any type of lie detector test to confirm that, and he reached out to Cindy's father, Edward Zarzycki, for permission to write him from prison to disclose the details surrounding the incident. Cindy disappeared on April 20, 1986, from an Eastpointe Dairy Queen.

"Maybe it would help us both if he knew everything," Ream said.

It's the first time Ream had spoken since the start of his estimated week-long murder trial; a Macomb County jury found him guilty June 18 of first-degree premeditated murder, although a body was never found.

Edward Zarzycki said he may read letters written by Ream, but only if they're delivered through the Eastpointe Police Department.

"I don't know if he could tell us anything different than we already know," said Zarzycki, 61, of Lexington. "It was pretty tough to hear him. He didn't say he didn't murder her."

Ream was not given a sentencing deal, even though he led investigators to a 22-acre wooded Macomb Township site last month where remains were found that are believed to be Cindy's. The bones were determined to be consistent with those of a teenage Caucasian girl, and DNA testing is being conducted at the University of West Texas.

Circuit Judge Mary Chrzanowski thanked Ream for divulging the location of Cindy's body.

"That, indeed, put a final closure to Cindy's life," she said. "It was very important they learned of that. It took a big man to do that because you didn't have to. But, the sad part about this case is that we're never going to know the truth.

"The truth is what the jury said, and we have to live with that."

Ream's defense attorney, Timothy Kohler, filed a motion for a new trial after the sentencing.

"I thought that the jury verdict wasn't consistent with the facts," he said.

"In this case, there's a big question whether or not he showed premeditation."

Ream's sentencing closes another chapter for family and friends of Cindy who searched, waited and prayed for her and for answers to her disappearance.

They were relieved that a Macomb County jury declared on June 18 that Cindy was dead -- and not simply a runaway -- when they found Ream guilty.

The relief continued when Ream led authorities to the shallow grave on a wooded riverbank.

And relatives waiting for confirmation that the remains are Cindy's are confident because several items, including a purse, necklace and homemade cassette tapes, were found with the remains.

Chrzanowski's courtroom was packed Thursday with Cindy's family and friends, many of whom held photographs and cried softly as Cindy's siblings addressed the court.

"You are pure evil, a coward who did the worst thing I can imagine," said Cindy's brother, Edward A. Zarzycki. "My family has lost a daughter, sister, cousin and friend. It's a void in life that can't be replaced."

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Girl's 1986 death paralyzed a family

Siblings tell of trauma at killer's life sentencing

BY AMBER HUNT • FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • August 8, 2008

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When Arthur Ream kidnapped, killed and buried 13-year-old Cindy Zarzycki in 1986, he did more than take a life. He paralyzed her family.

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They couldn't move from their Eastpointe home for fear Cindy might return. They didn't change their phone number in case she called. They stopped and spoke with young women who bore any resemblance to the missing blonde in case it was Cindy suffering from amnesia.

Cindy long was treated as a runaway and not a homicide victim. It wasn't until this past January that Eastpointe Detective Derek (Mac) McLaughlin built up enough circumstantial evidence to charge Ream -- who was already in prison for sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl -- without a body.

He was convicted in June.

The years of not knowing were torture, Cindy's younger brother, Ed Zarzycki, told a Macomb County Circuit Court judge Thursday just before Ream was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

"You, Ream, are not a man," Zarzycki said, turning to face Ream, who stood before him with his hands shackled in Judge Mary Chrzanowski's courtroom. "You are pure evil."

Ream, however, told the court that "not everything is the way it seems."

He did not rape Cindy, he said, and offered to take a lie detector test. He did not say whether he killed Cindy, though he wrote in a presentence report that her death was an accident. He'd picked up Cindy, his son Scott's girlfriend, and took her to a warehouse where he worked, he said. Cindy fell 15 feet down an elevator shaft, and Ream buried the body to protect his son, who died 14 years ago in a car wreck, he said.

However, none of Cindy's bones were fractured when investigators recovered her remains last month after Ream finally

<http://www.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Girl%27s+1986+death+paralyzed+a+fami...> 08/08/2008

led them to Cindy's shallow grave in Macomb Township.

Ream's sentence was no surprise: After his first-degree murder conviction, he faced a mandatory life imprisonment sentence. But the sentencing highlighted how many lives were irrevocably changed when Cindy disappeared April 20, 1986.

"It's even changed the way we raise our kids," said Theresa Olechowski, 36, who was Cindy's best friend. "I have an 11-year-old daughter, and I won't let her out of my sight. ... I'm always panicked that she could just disappear.

"He did that to us."

Ream asked the judge for permission to write Cindy's father from prison and tell him what really happened. But after the sentencing, the elder Ed Zarzycki said he doesn't expect he'll accept the offer.

He refrained from speaking at the sentencing, he said, because Ream doesn't deserve to be comforted by learning that the family's faith in God has given them the strength to forgive him.

And it's with God that Cindy's siblings -- brother Ed Zarzycki and older sister Constance Johnson -- said they leave Ream's ultimate fate.

"Life in prison," Cindy's brother told her killer, "that's the least of your worries."

Contact **AMBER HUNT** at 586-469-4682 or alhunt@freepress.com.

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August 8, 2008

Emmett Twp. man charged with having child porn

Robert Warner
The Enquirer

Erin W. Merritt, 33, of Emmett Township was arraigned Thursday on six charges related to child pornography that police said they found on his home computer.

Merritt faces three charges of possessing child sexually abusive materials and three charges of use of a computer to commit a crime.

Emmett Township public safety officers said they found thousands of photos of children in pornographic situations on Merritt's computer after information was passed on to the department through a tip line at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Officers said an investigation had been in progress for months before Merritt's arrest Wednesday afternoon.

The child pornography charges carry maximum sentences of four years in jail and a \$10,000 fine on conviction, while the maximum penalty for conviction on the computer charges is seven years and a \$5,000 fine.

Merritt, who has three previous felony convictions according to court records, could have 15 years added to his sentence as a habitual offender if he's found guilty on one of the pornography charges.

The East Michigan Avenue resident was arraigned before Magistrate Robert Nickels in Calhoun County District Court. Nickels set bail for Merritt at \$250,000 after Calhoun County Assistant Prosecutor John Puzzuoli said there were children in the home where the suspect lived and that he had once failed to show up for a court date.

After Nickels read the charges to Merritt, who appeared by video link from the jail next to the courthouse, he asked the suspect if he understood the situation.

"I don't really understand none of it," Merritt replied.

Nickels reviewed the charges and potential penalties and Merritt responded then that he understood them.

Puzzuoli said Merritt had been convicted in two breaking and entering cases and an assault with intent to commit bodily harm less than murder. Those convictions came in Kalamazoo County in 1994 and 1995, he said.

A preliminary examination on the charges was scheduled for Aug. 20. He was lodged in the Calhoun County Jail.

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Trial to begin in case of two charged with poisoning boy in 1985

Posted by Shannon Murphy | The Flint Journal August 08, 2008 10:41AM

FLINT, Michigan -- After more than 20 years, a brother and sister will face trial on charges they poisoned 11-year-old Christopher Alan Brown, then threw his body into the Flint River.

The trial in the 1985 death of the Flint boy, who was known as Alan, is expected to begin in Genesee County Circuit Court on Tuesday after months of delay. The trial originally was scheduled for March, but was postponed while attorneys for the state's Attorney General's office -- which is trying the case -- and the defense discussed potential expert witnesses.

Rosalind L. Brown of Wyoming, Christopher's stepmother, and her brother Montel Pettiford, of Flint, were charged with first-degree murder. Alan's body was pulled from the Flint River on April 30, 1985, more than two weeks after he was last seen at the Genesee Township home of his father and stepmother.

The boys' death initially was ruled an accidental drowning. The case was reopened in 2004, after his body was exhumed and toxicology reports showed he had ingested a substance strong enough to incapacitate him.

Earlier testimony from Pettiford's ex-wife said she saw her then-husband pour liquid from a bottle marked with a skull and crossbones onto food and drink given to Alan.

Attorney Mark Latchana, who is representing Brown, said his client maintains her innocence and he expects her to be exonerated in trial.

"The Attorney General's office has very little, if any, evidence tying my client to any of the allegations surrounding the death of this child," he said.

Stephen Lazzio, who is representing Pettiford, said he plans to prove the death was accidental.

"Evidence indicates the young man enjoyed fishing," Lazzio said. "He probably walked to the side of the bank, tripped, fell in and drowned."

He said alcohol found in his body that some experts said was poison will be explained at trial as created as the body decomposed.

"The key thing is when the deceased was found some years ago, at the time of the initial autopsy (accidental drowning) is exactly what the first doctor concluded," Lazzio said. "There has been nothing found in the intervening years to upset that theory."

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Rape victim assaulted again two days later

CADILLAC - A 27-year-old woman who was sexually assaulted Tuesday was assaulted again in an unrelated incident early Thursday.

Police say the suspect in the second assault was the victim's estranged boyfriend and was arrested on an unrelated charge.

Police say the victim was found by an employee of Northland Trailers on Mitchell Street about 6:40 a.m. Thursday. She was conscious and alert when police arrived and transported to Mercy Hospital in Cadillac with lacerations to her face and body. Her condition was not known.

"Right now this appears to be a domestic violence case and not related to (Tuesday's assault), other than it might be in retaliation," said Jeff Hawke, director of public safety for the city of Cadillac. "We do expect felony charges against her estranged boyfriend."

The 40-year-old suspect was living in a tent in the yard of a friend, Hawke said. The assault took place in an area behind the tent and near a trail behind the businesses on Mitchell Street.

Hawke said police believe the victim was with the suspect voluntarily, "but that has not been confirmed."

"It is unusual for someone to be a victim twice in such a short " period of time," Hawke said.

He said it is a complicated case and members of Cadillac Area OASIS/Family Resource Center are involved with the case and assisting the victim, Hawke said.

"We are doing everything we can to help the victim," Hawke said. "What happened to her should not happen to anybody."

He also said it was important for area residents to understand that the victim knew the suspect in Thursday's assault and became acquainted with the suspects in Tuesday's assault. Neither were considered random assaults.

"The community needs to know there is not some dangerous person running around the community," Hawke said.

The three suspects in Tuesday's assault have been arraigned on charges of criminal sexual conduct first degree force or coercion and unarmed robbery.

It is Cadillac News policy not to release names of sexual assault victims.

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Second assault

- What: Rape victim assaulted again
- When: Early Thursday morning
- Who: A 40-year-old man known to the woman. Three men who assaulted her were in jail at the time and police say were not involved in the second assault



Judge sets trial date for Ubly man facing murder charges in deaths of two women

Posted by The Saginaw News August 08, 2008 07:20AM

A jury will hear the case of a Huron County man accused of killing his girlfriend and her daughter.

Sanilac County Circuit Judge Donald A. Teeple set a Tuesday, Oct. 21, trial for Mark J. Soule.

The 49-year-old Ubly man faces two open counts of murder in the March 10 deaths of Janice Boal, 50, of Ubly, and Stacey A. Kredell, 30, of Bad Axe.

A conviction could lead to a sentence of up to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Soule was in jail on \$750,000 cash or surety bond.

State mental health officials in July determined he is competent to stand trial.

Sanilac County sheriff's deputies found the remains of Boal and Kredell after Soule called 911 to confess to the killings.

Deputies found the bodies in a pole barn on East Charleston near Minden in Austin Township, records show. Soule's parents own the property.

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